



ELP2

Environmental Leadership Programme 2

Impact Report Summer 2024



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"For the past nine months, I've been a participant [on the] Environmental Leadership Programme. It's been a privilege to participate in an opportunity to **learn and grow alongside other young people interested in sustainability and environmental issues.**

What has struck me is how **accessible the programme has been** - for one thing, it was free to people based in the West Midlands aged between 18 and 25. The sessions were also a mixture of online and in-person, which helped me personally as someone balancing a full-time job and chronic pain alongside completing the programme.

The discussions we've had have really **helped shape my approach to climate action and made me think in new ways.** It's **made me excited about fostering my future in the environmental movement and helped me develop skills for a green career.** For our final nature connection project, my team ran a handful of "pot and paint" workshops where people would paint pots before planting seeds in them called "The Indoor Garden Project," in the aims of engaging people who don't have their own garden or don't have the time or energy to maintain an outdoor garden. **Getting to chat with new people in the local area whilst engaging in something creative was a really refreshing and beautiful experience.**

The climate crisis is such a huge and daunting issue that often I've felt powerless and small, unable to enact the grand, sweeping changes I want to see in the world. But through fostering knowledge and connection in ELP, **I've come to appreciate more that change can also be at the roots** - that the little interactions we have and the communities we build are pockets of resistance to the daily grind of urban industrialism that George Monbiot terms "ecological boredom," and as a collective, to impending extinction."

Hannah, ELP2 participant, June 2024

During the pandemic, UpRising made the decision to pivot its regionally based, face to face delivery approach to a combined national, digitally delivered offering across all of its programmes so that we could continue to meet the needs of our beneficiaries during unprecedented times.

Since that time, as we have transitioned from the necessity of digital delivery, feedback from both participants and delivery staff has reinforced our belief that there was more to explore within the realm of digital delivery. We were also fully open to the fact that some things just work better in person and as such were keen to explore what a hybrid version of our ELP might look like.

In March 2023 UpRising were delighted to have won multi-year funding from the Climate Action Fund to deliver an updated iteration of our Environmental Leadership Programme named ELP2, alongside our partners, The Shropshire Wildlife Trust. Over four delivery cycles, UpRising and The Shropshire Wildlife Trust will support circa 400 young people aged 18 – 25 from underrepresented and underserved backgrounds across the West Midlands region to:

- Build a stronger personal connection to nature
- Understand how this drives behaviour change
- Co-create and deliver nature connection campaigns in their own communities

Year 1 of the recently completed ELP2 has been a fantastic opportunity for the cross organisational delivery team to trial the following design principles when designing and creating the curriculum framework and participant journey for this cohort.

Design principles that ELP2 applies when developing hybrid programme content:

- Coherent, relevant, up-to-date and applicable content
- Participant centred and inclusive programme design and wraparound support
- One that fosters a deep approach to learning and participation
- One that encourages independence in and reflection on learning and application to participants individual contexts
- Creating opportunities for participants to hear from and shared lived experience and knowledge on key themes throughout the programme
- Continuous improvement based on feedback from participants and peers, evaluation and review

The information gathered in this report, collated from; participant surveys and feedback, staff reflections and the combined experiences of the two organisations involved in the delivery of Year 1 of this ambitious programme has shaped the 'Recommendations for future programming' section below. I am grateful to all those that have contributed their time and energy in helping us to understand and adapt critical areas of programme and partnership delivery and management in order to continue to offer a quality, participant driven programme at a time when the young people we serve need it the most.

Rukaiya Jeraj
Head of Programmes
August 2024



Thank you

This programme would not have been possible without funding from Climate Action Fund and the amazing support we received from some excellent individuals and organisations, including:

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and the wonderful **professional coaches** who expertly supported members of our cohort on their journey.



1. Overview

The Environmental Leadership Programme 2 (ELP2) was launched in 2023 led by UpRising, in partnership with the Shropshire Wildlife Trust. The programme, with its bespoke curriculum focussed on developing nature connections through practical delivery of campaigning, has created a platform for future green leaders across the West Midlands.

The programme followed a comprehensive theory of change, wherein participants undertook nine months of part-time development through a flexible hybrid approach. This included a blend of face-to-face workshops, panel events, and seminars led by the programme team, alongside online delivery for those unable to attend in person. To accommodate varied schedules, all sessions were made available for catch-up via the online learning platform, Mighty Networks. Throughout the programme, participants benefited from regular input by expert guest speakers and facilitators, as well as dedicated support from the pastoral team to enhance their learning experience.

The ELP2 Year 1 programme has demonstrated **significant positive impacts on participants** across multiple domains. Analysis of pre- and post-programme surveys reveals substantial improvements in leadership self-perception, environmental awareness, project management skills, and professional networking capabilities.

Key findings include:

- A marked increase in participants identifying as leaders, rising from 45% to 90%.
- Substantial growth in understanding environmental issues and how to influence related decisions.
- Significant improvement in project management skills, with positive responses increasing from 45% to 95%.
- A 54% increase in participants' professional networking capabilities.
- Enhanced confidence in various areas, including job prospects and ability to make change.
- Improved resilience and problem-solving skills.



The programme appears to have taken a holistic approach, fostering growth in confidence, knowledge, networks, and practical skills. While all areas showed improvement, the **most notable changes were in environmental awareness**, project management, and professional networking.

These results suggest that the ELP2 Year 1 programme is **effectively preparing young people to engage actively with social and environmental challenges**, while simultaneously enhancing their personal and professional development. The comprehensive nature of the improvements indicates that **participants are likely to be well-equipped for future leadership roles in various sectors, particularly those related to sustainability and social impact**.

The Nature Connection component of the programme has demonstrated significant positive impacts on participants' relationship with nature, with our Nature Connection Index revealing notable improvements in several areas:

- 65% of participants felt a stronger connection to nature
- 53% reported a heightened sense of amazement in nature
- 47% experienced increased happiness from being in nature
- 41% showed greater appreciation for nature's beauty

These findings **indicate the programme's effectiveness in deepening participants' connection with nature, likely encouraging pro-environmental behaviours**. While some areas showed modest improvements, the overall results provide a strong foundation for future programme development and enhancement.

Targets

The following targets were set for the programme in 2023:

- Reach 200 young people annually through taster sessions and recruitment activities
- Engage 115 young people in the first week of activities annually
- Graduate 80-100 young people annually
- Achieve an 80% graduation rate among those who engaged in the first week's sessions
- Annually, achieve the creation of 15-20 NCCs (60-80 during the lifecycle of the programme)
- Impact, engage, and benefit 600-800 wider community members during the lifecycle of the programme
- Annually, impact, engage, and benefit 150-200 community members
- Graduate cohorts with 75% of participants having increased knowledge, skills, networks, and confidence about how change happens and their role in driving it
- Graduate a cohort with 75% of participants demonstrating an increased connection to nature.
- Graduate a cohort with 75% of participants showing a positive change in their behaviour towards the environment.

Cohort breakdown

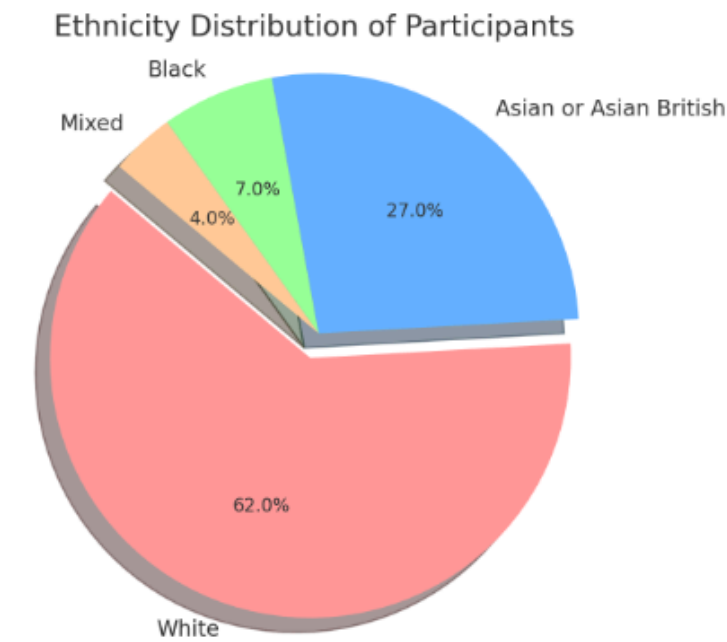
The delivery team practised an open application recruitment process to engage and onboard young people onto the programme.

Below are details of the numbers of individuals engaging with different stages of the open recruitment process.

Applications	Accepted	Started	Completed
83	68	64	25

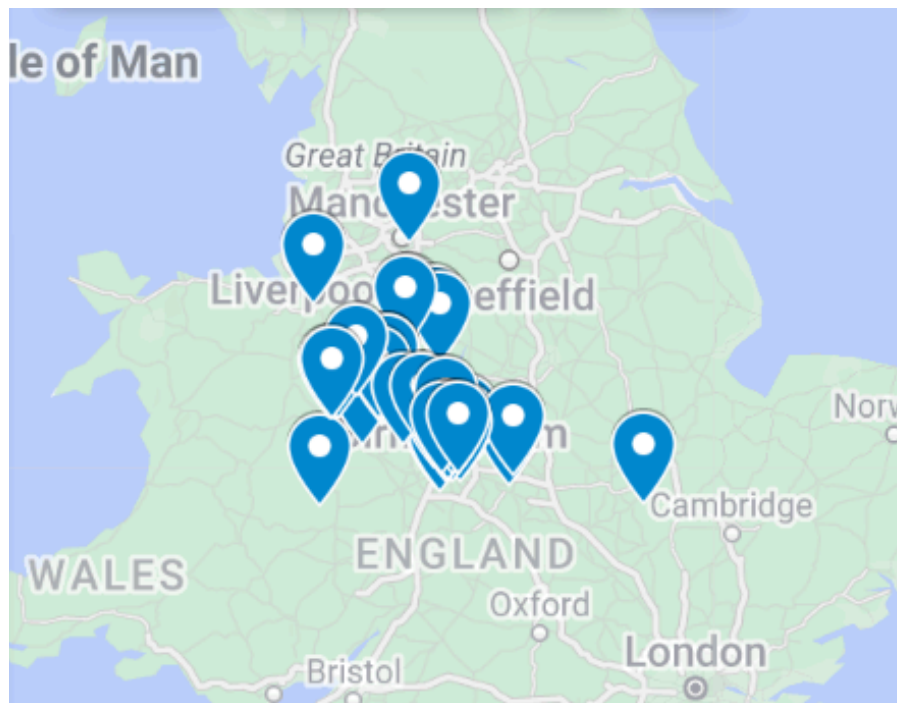
The following statistics were of the 46 participants that enrolled on and attended the programme launch session in October 2023:

- 62% White; 27% Asian or Asian British; 7% Black; 4% Mixed



- 66% identify as female, 26% as male, 7% as non-binary and 2% prefer not to say
- 15% have disclosed that they have a disability and 24% that they have additional needs
- 44% of participants told us that neither of their parents had attended university by the time they were 18. Of these, 16% have themselves obtained an undergraduate degree or higher
- 42% of our participants are studying full-time and 20% are working full-time; several of our participants are both working and studying in some combination e.g., 5% studying full-time and working part-time, or are engaged in activities such as apprenticeships; 7% are unemployed.
- 30% of applicants heard about the programme through university (primarily the University of Birmingham)

The below visual shows where in the UK participants were based:



Highlights

- **Significant learning moments that triggered behaviour change and engaging workshops** - participants valued impactful sessions, particularly the Diaspora workshop, which resonated deeply with their values and led to important reflections on privilege and its societal impacts.
- **Emphasis on community and expert insights** - the programme highlighted the crucial role of community in driving social change and provided valuable perspectives from industry experts, including the idea that non-linear career paths can be effective.
- **Expanded knowledge, local engagement, and campaign development** - participants appreciated learning new concepts like 'eco-feminism' and 'greenwashing,' were inspired by local engagement opportunities, and successfully developed and delivered five nature connection campaigns, enhancing their practical impact.

Challenges

- **Time constraints and scheduling conflicts** - participants struggled with balancing the programme with their busy schedules, leading to difficulties in fully engaging and attending sessions, whether in-person or online.
- **Need for greater clarity and structure** - there was a demand for clearer guidance on campaign mechanics, roles, and expectations, as well as suggestions for enhancing session content with more practical opportunities and field skills.
- **Disconnection and networking challenges** - participants felt isolated due to gaps between sessions and limited interaction opportunities, impacting their ability to build connections with others, particularly through online platforms.
- **Recruitment and retention issues** - challenges in recruiting participants that matched the intended demographics, combined with difficulties in maintaining engagement and commitment throughout the programme, affected participant retention throughout the duration of the programme.
- **Engagement with programme data collection**, specifically towards the end of the programme was challenging. The programmes team will work on streamlining data collection for year 2 to encourage better response rates and avoid overloading participants with multiple surveys and feedback forms.

2. Impact

External feedback

- “Can I just thank the whole UpRising team for your hard work with this totally fantastic project that has never been more relevant in terms of the challenges we have around inclusivity and environmental challenge. And thank you for involving me as I love helping where I can.” - guest speaker and Dragon's Den panellist, **Jim Davies, The Environment Agency**
- “I really enjoyed last night – it was different to what I usually get to do and I loved meeting all the ELP young people and hearing about their great campaign ideas, and also enjoyed meeting the other ‘Dragons’. What a talented and committed group of young people!” - Dragon's Den panellist, **Joy Howells, SHNL**
- “I had a lovely time and it was inspiring to meet so many engaged and enthusiastic environmental champions!” - guest facilitator, **Katy Wade, The National Trust**

Summary in stats

- **64 participants** enrolled onto the programme, completing the pre-course survey.
- **22 sessions**, with a **total of 82 contact hours**.
- **10** Coaching relationships.
- **5 Nature Connection Campaigns** started by participants focussing on improving nature connection across different communities.
- **28** facilitators and guest speakers representing **19** different organisations
- **71** total members on the Slack Workspace, with **40** monthly active users still engaging at the end of the programme.

Nature Connection on ELP2

Connecting with nature and understanding its significance was a key theme in the reflections. Participants appreciated activities that deepened this connection, helping them “open their eyes to areas of nature connection they might have lost or have been buried.” This greater understanding of nature's role in environmental care was seen as a valuable aspect of the programme. Many shared how they learned to incorporate nature connection into their lives and use it to inspire others to care about the environment.

The programme also encouraged participants to think critically about sustainability and the broader societal impact of their actions. Sessions on sustainability sparked discussions on how to implement more sustainable ways of living and critique the UN sustainability goals. Practical applications of these discussions included attending climate cafes and participating in climate change panels, which were directly influenced by the programme..

In their applications, participants expressed dedicated interest in the environment, often citing environmental issues they have personally witnessed near where they live, such as flooding of the River Severn and associated litter accumulation.

Other environmental problems noted by participants included:

- Lack of green spaces;
- Increased pollution, litter, traffic noise;
- Lack of connection to nature;
- Destruction of nature (e.g., building projects destroying wildlife).

Applicants expressed being personally and politically interested in environmental issues and described actions they had taken in these areas, such as volunteering

or working in the environmental sector.

Participants described how they enjoyed connecting with nature in various ways, such as by visiting local landmarks (e.g., nature reserves such as Sandwell Valley). However, some described accessibility issues, such as not having access to a car

Nature Connection Index findings

Before partaking on the programme, participants were asked to complete a Nature Connection Index which would identify their connection with nature. Questions were developed from the 2019 article 'A Measure of Nature Connectedness for Children and Adults: Validation, Performance, and Insights. Sustainability' and were about their relationship with nature (meaning all types of natural environment and all the plants and animals living in them).

17 programme participants completed both parts of the Nature Connection Index, Whilst this means the below findings only reflect around two thirds of the graduating cohort, we are able to see how the programme is already impacting the perspectives and behaviours of participants, even as soon as upon graduation.]

The data from this pilot programme offers an encouraging foundation for future development. The findings highlight several areas of significant success and suggest promising opportunities for further enhancement.

¹ Richardson, M., Hunt, A., Hinds, J., Bragg, R., Fido, D., Petronzi, D. Barbett, L., Clitherow, T. and White, M. (2019). A Measure of Nature Connectedness for Children and Adults: Validation, Performance, and Insights. Sustainability. 11(12), 3250; <https://doi.org/10.3390/su11123250>

- **"I always find beauty in nature"**
 - 41% of participants showed an **increased appreciation for the beauty of nature**, with the proportion of positive responses rising from 41% before the programme to 65% afterwards.
 - The 24 percentage point (pp) increase in positive responses and 31% average individual improvement suggest that **the programme is already helping many participants deepen their connection with nature.**
- **"I always treat nature with respect"**
 - 29% of participants reported an improvement in their respect for nature, building on an already strong 47% who were respectful before the programme. This increased to 53% afterwards.
 - The 6 pp increase and 3% average improvement indicate that respect for nature is an area with potential for further development. Future development to the programme could specifically target this area
- **"Being in nature makes me very happy"**
 - Nearly half (47%) of participants experienced an **increase in happiness from being in nature**, with positive responses climbing from 76% to 88%.
 - The 12 pp increase and 28% average improvement suggest that **the programme is already making a meaningful difference to participants' well-being and joy derived from nature.**
- **"Spending time in nature is very important to me"**
 - 41% of **participants now place greater importance on spending time in nature**, with positive responses increasing from 65% to 76%.
 - The 11 pp increase and 35% average improvement highlight the programme's potential to further instil the importance of nature in participants' lives.
- **"I find being in nature really amazing"**
 - Over half (53%) of participants reported a **heightened sense of amazement in nature**, with positive responses increasing from 65% to 82%.
 - The 17 pp increase and 34% average improvement demonstrate the programme's ability to inspire awe and wonder in participants.
- **"I feel part of nature"**
 - A remarkable **65% of participants felt a stronger connection to nature**, with positive responses nearly doubling from 35% to 65%.
 - The 30 pp increase and 58% average improvement evidence the programme's impact in helping participants feel integrated with the natural world. **This shows the programme's potential for fostering a meaningful sense of belonging in nature.**

Looking forward

This pilot programme has already demonstrated its capacity to positively influence participants' relationships with nature. The improvements seen in areas such as connection to nature, appreciation of beauty, and the sense of amazement are particularly promising considering the connection between these factors and pro-environmental behaviours and activity.

Looking forward to years two, three and four, the programme has potential to deepen impact even further. The areas where more subtle improvements were observed—such as respect for nature—offer valuable opportunities for targeted development, ensuring that future iterations of the programme can deliver even more transformative outcomes for participants.

As such these findings demonstrate that the programme is well-positioned to evolve and achieve even greater success in the future.



Nature Connection Campaigns

A core part of the programme is the development of Nature Connection Campaigns by groups of programme participants. This module takes place during the second half of the programme and is focused on supporting participants to build on and action the learning developed through the programme to drive sustainable positive change in their own communities.

These focus on communities including individuals unable to garden outdoors, such as those with disabilities or financial constraints, university students and local communities in Selly Oak, and Sandwell. Topics include:

- Sustainable arts and crafts with a focus on nature connection and local plant use
- Indoor gardening and recycling second-hand plant pots through workshops
- Nature connection and citizen science through guided walks and environmental education

Each Nature Connection Campaign was set the below Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), with which they were given support by means of programme sessions, a NCC workbook and individual campaign support to achieve. These KPIs were:

Key Performance Indicator	Target	Evidence needed
Engagement - community members have been engaged	15 people	Event attendance, petition signatures, social media comments, focus groups, surveys, interviews, testimonials
Evidence - campaign activity has taken place	Two of the following: • Photos • Feedback from event/action participants • Participant case study/ies	Photos of an event or campaign group members taking action; social media metrics; feedback / evaluation; media coverage

Campaign case studies

Case study: Wildlife Connection Collective

The group, consisting of nine members, aimed to strengthen people's connection with nature, educate them about their environment, and encourage participation in citizen science. They are not planning to continue their campaign beyond the programme's end.

They organised eight guided walks, each attended by ten people, to promote pro-environmental behaviour. Participants learned to identify nettles, pick only fallen plants, and gain basic skills in identifying plants, birds, and insects. Activities included pond dipping, birdwatching, and bug hunting, with children using nature-themed activity booklets. The group also utilised apps like iNaturalist, Merlin, and Obsidentify.

Promotion was handled through Facebook and Instagram, posters distributed at RSPB Sandwell Valley and Great Barr Library, and notices placed around Birmingham. Networking at a youth climate café led to promotion in a BBC Wildlife Trust email. The Meetup app was used for event sign-ups. The group's advertising efforts included Instagram, Facebook, and Meetup, with informative posts and direct outreach to organisations. They collected evidence using survey sheets and questionnaires but found it challenging to get participants to complete them. They engaged with 13 partners, with notable support from RSPB Sandwell Valley, which provided risk assessments, equipment, and first aid services. Challenges included scheduling issues and inconsistent digital communication.

To measure impact, the group gathered survey responses, event photos, and a participant's social media review. Despite difficulties in building a strong social media presence and attracting sufficient participants for complete surveys, the group felt they successfully enhanced nature connection among participants and believe their impact would have grown with continued efforts.

Instagram: @wildlifeconnectioncollective

Case study: Indoor Garden Project

The group, made up of six members, aimed to enhance participants' connection with nature through indoor workshops. These sessions focused on painting second-hand plant pots and planting indoor plants, promoting both nature connection and the circular economy by reusing pots. They particularly targeted individuals who might not have access to outdoor gardening due to disability or financial constraints and plan to continue their campaign beyond the programme's end.

They hosted two workshops, each with 12 attendees, encouraging pro-environmental behaviour by using second-hand pots and demonstrating the value of reusing materials. Participants were given plants to create their own indoor green spaces.

Promotion was done exclusively through Instagram via the account @theindoorgardenproject. The group created informative posts and collaborated with local organisations and similar Instagram pages. Their posts garnered an average of 21 likes, peaking at 57 likes on one post.

To assess impact, participants completed pre- and post-session surveys. The group aimed for positive feedback and a sense of improved wellbeing or connection with nature, and they met their target of over 10 attendees across both workshops.

Feedback included comments such as, "It was nice to have a moment of community," "Nice to bring nature into the home and watch my own sweet pea plant grow," and "I learned to appreciate different plant types more." This indicated that the workshops achieved their goals.

Challenges included quantifying the impact of nature connection and ensuring participants completed both pre- and post-session surveys. They also faced issues with scheduling and budget constraints but ultimately found suitable venues.

The group engaged with four local partners: Moseley Hive, Food Union Coventry, The POD Café, and Coventry Cathedral. Existing contacts and a shared ethos made partnership engagement relatively easy. The visit to Food Union's 'Live and Dye' garden provided additional insights into medicinal herbs and dye plants.

Overall, the group successfully created opportunities for indoor nature connection through recycled materials. Despite some logistical challenges, they found the project to be enjoyable and effective in fostering nature and social connections.

Insight: Citizen Science Campaign

KPI 1 - Engage 20 people with your campaign

- 11 people engaged with at Great Barr Library
- Gideon and Jani handed out leaflets at Church at Birmingham City Centre
- 10 attendees on walks in total
- Reaching out on social media: 16 direct messages, at least 8 reposts

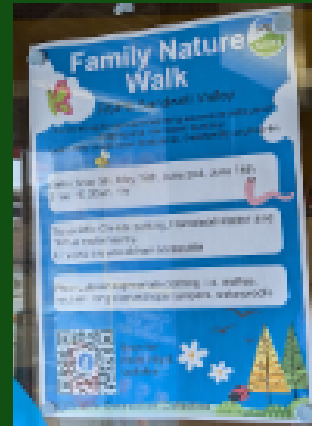
KPI 2 - Engage with a local partner

- RSPB Sandwell Valley - radio feature
- BBC Wildlife Trust - email exchanges

community engagement at Hamstead Library and The Gap

KPI 3 - Collect 2 pieces of evidence

- Data survey sheets, questionnaires
- Photographs, videos (social media as evidence)
- Feedback on Social Media (anonymised!)
- Matchboxes
- Go find it cards



Case study: Selly Oak Grounded

The group, consisting of eight members, aimed to deepen participants' connection with nature through art and plant-based activities. Their focus was on using renewable materials and promoting local products, targeting university students and the local community in Selly Oak. They planned to continue their campaign beyond the programme's end.

They hosted six weekly workshops centred on arts and crafts with a nature theme, each attracting around ten attendees, totalling approximately sixty unique participants. These workshops were designed to encourage sustainable practices and creativity with natural materials. However, due to logistical issues, they were unable to carry out the planned planting sessions and instead adapted by focusing on art activities that encouraged outdoor engagement.

Promotion was carried out through posters at the University of Birmingham and Grounded, as well as on Instagram with informative posts and calls to action. Feedback from participants was positive, with many noting a stronger connection to nature and feeling confident in continuing the activities independently. The group partnered with Grounded and Birmingham Art Therapy, who provided funding, equipment, and training for each session.

Challenges included having to modify their plans from using the Grounded garden to working with potted plants and herbs, and communication difficulties arising from the large group size. In evaluating their efforts, the group concluded that a smaller, more communicative team would likely have achieved better results.

Individual leadership development

To assess the impact of our program on participants' skills, knowledge, and connection to nature, we conducted surveys both before (pre-course) and after (post-course) the program. These surveys help us measure the development of key areas outlined in the programme Theory of Change..

Baseline and end-line surveys:

- **Baseline survey (pre-course):** This initial survey was administered before participants began the programme. It gathered data on their existing skills, knowledge, and connection to nature. This serves as the starting point for understanding their initial level of proficiency and engagement.
- **Endline survey (post-course):** This follow-up survey was conducted after the completion of the programme. It measured the same aspects as the baseline survey to determine the extent of improvement or change experienced by the participants.

20 programme participants completed both surveys, allowing comparison. Whilst this means the below findings only reflect around three quarters of the graduating cohort, we are able to see how the programme is already impacting the beliefs, skills and behaviours of participants, even as soon as upon graduation.

Key:

- **% seeing improvement (% improve)** - these figures show the percentage of the cohort that showed some improvement in the corresponding theory of change area. This includes any level of improvement, for example individuals whose answers to a question improved from strongly disagree to strongly agree, and also individuals whose answers to a question improved from agree to strongly agree, or alternatively anyone whose answers changed from strongly disagree to disagree.
- **% positive response before (% before)** - these figures show the percentage of the cohort who responded positively to a question relating to the theory of change area before taking part in the programme.

- **% positive response after (% after)** - these figures show the percentage of the cohort who responded positively to a question relating to the theory of change area after taking part in the programme.
- **PP increase in positive response (PP)** - these figures show the percentage point increase in positive responses - the difference between the two previous columns.
- **Average % increase (average %)** - these figures show the average increase in the theory of change area for an individual programme participant. For example, each participant improved their confidence levels by an average of 48%.

Theory of Change theme	% improve	% before	% after	PP	Average %
Skills	51%	67%	92%	25%	15%
Knowledge	47%	67%	92%	25%	14%
Confidence	46%	56%	84%	28%	15%
Networks	58%	40%	76%	36%	16%

Survey findings

1. Leadership and self-perception: The dramatic increase in participants seeing themselves as leaders (from 45% to 90%) is particularly significant. This suggests that the programme was highly effective in building leadership identity and confidence. The implications of this change could be far-reaching, potentially leading to more active civic engagement and willingness to take on leadership roles in various contexts.

2. Environmental awareness and action: There was a substantial improvement in participants' understanding of how to influence environmental decisions (39% increase) and their knowledge of key environmental issues. This indicates that the program successfully equipped participants with both knowledge and actionable strategies for environmental advocacy. The high post-programme scores in understanding environmental challenges (95% positive) suggest that participants are well-prepared to engage in informed environmental activism.

3. Project management and practical skills: The large increase in project management understanding (from 45% to 95% positive responses) indicates a strong focus on practical skills. This improvement, coupled with increased confidence in using social media for campaigns, suggests that participants are now better equipped to organise and lead real-world initiatives.

4. Networking and professional development: The most significant percentage change was in developing a network of contacts across different professional industries (54% increase). This, combined with improved confidence in getting desired jobs (26% increase), suggests that the programme has enhanced participants' career prospects and professional networks. The long-term impact could be increased social mobility and diverse career paths for participants.

5. Political engagement and efficacy: While there were improvements in political interest and belief in the ability to influence politics, the changes were more modest compared to other areas. The statement "A person like me could do a good job as an MP" saw only a 6% increase, remaining one of the lower-scored items. This suggests that while the programme improved overall political engagement, there might still be barriers to participants seeing themselves in high-level political roles.

6. Resilience and problem-solving: The increase in ability to "bounce back" (22% change) and confidence in involving others to fix problems (19% change) indicates improved resilience and collaborative problem-solving skills. These are crucial life skills that can benefit participants in various personal and professional situations.

7. Diversity and inclusion awareness: The high pre-programme scores in understanding diverse lived experiences and the impact of environmental issues on

different people suggest that participants came in with strong awareness of these issues. The programme further reinforced this, achieving 100% positive responses in some related questions post-programme.

8. Confidence in professional settings: Improvements in teamwork comfort, explaining ideas clearly, and understanding personal strengths as a leader all point to enhanced readiness for professional environments. This could lead to better performance in job interviews, workplace interactions, and leadership roles.

9. Holistic development: The improvements across various categories (Confidence, Knowledge, Networks, Skills) suggest that the programme took a holistic approach to participant development. This comprehensive growth is likely to have a synergistic effect, with improvements in one area reinforcing others.

10. Areas for future focus: While most areas saw improvement, some, like confidence in the inclusivity of desired industries, saw smaller changes. This could indicate areas where the programme might want to place more emphasis in future iterations.

Meaning and implications

- The programme appears to be **particularly effective in building confidence, practical skills, and networks**, which are crucial for young people entering the workforce or higher education.
- The strong focus on environmental issues and project management suggests that **participants are being prepared for roles in sustainability** and social impact sectors.
- The improvements in leadership self-perception and skills could lead to **a new generation of community leaders and activists**.
- While political engagement improved, there's still room for growth in encouraging participants to see themselves in high-level political roles.
- The holistic nature of the improvements suggests that participants are likely to be **more well-rounded and adaptable** in their future endeavours.
- The programme seems to be successful in **bridging the gap between awareness of issues (which was already high in some cases) and the practical skills and confidence needed to act** on that awareness.

Project vision and long-term goals (2023):

Over four delivery cycles, UpRising (UR) and Shropshire Wildlife Trust (SWT) will support circa 400 young people aged 18 – 25 from underrepresented and underserved backgrounds across the West Midlands region to:

- Build a stronger personal connection to nature
- Understand how this drives behaviour change
- Co-create and deliver nature connection campaigns in their own communities

From this we also pledge to:

- Develop resources so that young people across the UK can achieve the same

Moreover, the programme's success in bridging the gap between environmental awareness and practical action is a direct reflection of the goal to drive behaviour change through a deeper connection to nature. Participants are also well-prepared to tackle social and environmental challenges, confirming the programme's effectiveness in empowering young leaders to make an impact in sustainability and social sectors.

In summary, these outcomes demonstrate that **the programme is effectively realising its vision of helping young people connect with nature, lead significant initiatives, and drive meaningful change within their communities.**

The **programme outcomes clearly align with the vision and goals** set by UpRising and Shropshire Wildlife Trust . Participants have gained confidence and practical skills, directly supporting the vision of empowering young people to lead nature connection campaigns within their communities. Their deepening understanding of environmental issues and project management directly ties into the programme's aim to foster a strong personal connection to nature and drive behaviour change.

The development of leadership skills among participants reflects the vision of nurturing future community leaders and activists. While political engagement has increased, there remains scope for further growth, reflecting the programme's objective to encourage young people to influence environmental policy and effect systemic change. The holistic development of participants—becoming more well-rounded and adaptable—supports the vision's long-term goal of sustaining community and environmental initiatives.



Participant journeys

Key themes:

- 1. Personal growth and increased confidence** - participants experienced significant improvements in communication skills and self-confidence.
- 2. Overcoming barriers** - the programme helped participants address and overcome various personal and professional barriers.
- 3. Career development and professional aspirations** - the programme clarified and advanced participants' career goals in the environmental sector.
- 4. Community and making connections** - valuable friendships and professional networks were built through the programme.
- 5. New perspectives through learning and exposure** - participants gained new insights into nature, environmental action, and cultural perspectives.
- 6. Encouragement and inclusivity** - participants recommended the programme for its inclusivity and the diverse opportunities it provides.

During their time on the programme, participants were invited to complete an individual Reflection Log. These logs offered participants a formal way to individually reflect on their journey within the ELP2, with logs sent out at the end of each month asking questions with text box answers for participants to complete.

The following two case studies provide insight into the individual journeys of two programme participants. The quotes provided are extracts collected from entries to participants' termly Reflection Logs:

Case study: Sascha

Growing up in Shropshire, Sascha always felt fortunate to be surrounded by nature. This early connection with the outdoors fostered her love for the environment and

inspired her to seek out nature more as she grew older. However, witnessing environmental degradation and the lack of opportunities to connect people with nature became increasingly challenging. Shortly after starting her first job as a teacher, a family member informed her about the Environmental Leadership Programme 2 (ELP2) available in the West Midlands. This free, nine-month programme for 18-25-year-olds seemed like the perfect opportunity for her to learn how to make a difference.

Before joining ELP2, Sascha's climate action efforts were mostly solitary. She recalls, "I had made personal changes to reduce my environmental impact, but I struggled to find and connect with like-minded individuals in my community." Many of her friends didn't share her passion, leaving her feeling isolated in her efforts to make a difference in Shropshire. The thought of attending local climate meetups was daunting. She imagined walking "into a room full of people twice my age wondering, 'Who is she?' and 'What does she know?'" This apprehension kept her from engaging with her local climate community.

A significant motivating factor in Sascha's desire to get involved in environmental action was the amount of food waste she witnessed in her life, particularly as a teacher working in a school. She had already taken steps to address this issue by establishing an eco-committee at her school, which led to the school winning the prestigious Eco-Schools Green Flag Award. Reflecting on her connection to nature, Sascha shared that she feels most connected "when swimming in the ocean and the lakes of North Wales," experiences that further fuelled her environmental aspirations.

ELP2 provided Sascha with a welcoming space to engage with climate issues and her local community. "From the first weekend, I met many people my age who shared my passion for making a difference," she said. As a 25-year-old, she was particularly inspired by the work of the youngest participants and began to believe that she could contribute more to her community. Throughout the course, participants built knowledge, skills, and confidence, enabling them to take more significant steps forward.

As part of the ELP2 course, Sascha and her peers were challenged to develop their own campaigns. They spent time planning and considering what their communities needed to connect them with nature. This experience led Sascha to engage directly with influential people across Shropshire, making her feel more connected to the climate community than ever before.

Over the course of the programme, Sascha reflected on her growth, acknowledging that she had "gained the skills to speak up more" and realised that she had "more knowledge than she thinks." The programme helped her develop the confidence to recognise the skills she already possessed from her teaching job. Not only did she find connections with like-minded individuals, but she also realised that her place within these groups was valued, not looked down upon. "I can make a difference," she affirmed. And that climate meetup she once feared attending? "Oh, and that climate meetup on Tuesday night filled with people twice my age? I hosted it," she proudly shared.

Sascha's green career aspirations are now focused on building projects that provide vital knowledge for free to those less fortunate and encouraging people to grow, cook, and share food in a community space. The programme empowered her to take on leadership roles she never thought possible, solidifying her transition from solitary climate action to community leadership.



Case study: Hassana

When Hassana first joined the Environmental Leadership Programme (ELP2), she was keen to broaden her understanding of environmental issues, particularly in Birmingham, where she lives. Already passionate about the outdoors, she had previously taken part in tree surveying across the city—a hands-on activity that allowed her to make a positive impact on her community while enjoying Birmingham's green spaces. Her love for nature and desire to connect with like-minded individuals were key motivations for applying to ELP2.

During her time on the programme, Hassana found herself not only deepening her knowledge of environmental issues but also engaging in meaningful conversations about the political and social challenges her peers had faced. She was particularly struck by how these experiences shaped their perspectives and fuelled their commitment to environmental activism. For Hassana, the programme's highlights included "making new friends, learning what nature means to others, and understanding how people from different backgrounds earned their roles within the fields of nature and environmental change."

Hassana felt that ELP2 met her expectations and more. The programme broadened her understanding of the intersection between nature, culture, and social change, sparking a desire to further develop her skills in these areas. She expressed an interest in exploring "how different cultures view nature, nature through art, material, songs, literature, and gaining insights into funding ideas for innovative projects."

After the programme, Hassana remains committed to her journey of environmental stewardship. She plans to continue her work on nature and gardening projects and to stay connected with the new friends and community she found through ELP2. Reflecting on her experience, Hassana encourages anyone considering the programme to "do it—it's fun, FREE, and you'll make some amazing friends and have incredible opportunities."

Hassana's feedback on ELP2 reflects the transformative impact it had on her. She writes:

"ELP2 provided new insights into nature connection, social change, and activism. During the programme, I met like-minded individuals who were activists and change-makers. I collaborated with several others to design a nature connection mental well-being programme, which was successful despite being a new experience for all of us. Through this experience, I made several new friends from different backgrounds and locations. We bonded with nature both in person and virtually, enjoying residential trips, participating in art sessions, and engaging in debates in Parliament about the future of change-makers and environmental actions. I would recommend this all-inclusive free event to everyone. Not only is it flexible and insightful, but it also encourages young activists regardless of their different academic backgrounds."

Hassana's journey through ELP2 is a testament to the power of community, education, and the shared goal of making a positive impact on the environment. Her story inspires others to embrace the opportunity to grow, connect, and lead within the ever-evolving field of environmental activism.



3. Programme delivery

The learning journey

Participant's learning took place over a combination 22 online and in-person programme sessions (totalling 82 hours of delivery) broken down into modules.

As well as the curriculum modules, participants were also offered regular drop-in sessions with members of the programmes team through which support needs were assessed and participants could gain regular pastoral support was provided through participant's allocated team member.

Interwoven into the learning journey were a number of nature connection experiences, dedicated to incorporating hands-on nature experiences into the curriculum. These included nature journaling, mammal and moth trapping, dusk sunset walks using a bat detector, and campfires.

On the following page you will find a detailed breakdown of the programme modules and events:



Module	Timeline	Detail/objectives
Onboarding & induction	Sept-Oct 23	Following being offered a place on the programme, participants enrol online and then attend a Launch Weekend event where they are able to meet their cohort of peers, the programme team and begin learning about the journey ahead of them on the programme.
Knowledge & skills	Nov-Dec 23	This module included: • The History of Movement Building • Nature Connection and Diaspora Communities • City Strategic Challenges • Privilege, Power and Identity • Green Sector Landscape • Careers in the Green Economy • Your Employability Toolkit • Networking and Relationship Building • Find Your Power
Power in Action	Mar 24	This module included an individual field trip to visit national power in action with a trip to Westminster.
Nature Connection Campaigns	Jan-Mar 24	This module took place over a number of programmes sessions and a residential 2-day Campaign Weekend: • Nature Connection and your Nature Connection Campaign (NCC) • Embedding EDI within your NCC • Theory of Change and your NCC • Say It: How to make your case • Do It: Dragon's Den • Making a Continued Impact • Plan It: Project Management & Goal Setting • Communities First • Scope It: Campaign Tactics
Graduation	Jul 24	This part of the programme included the facilitation of a session to establish ongoing support and a celebration event to mark the completion of the programme for UpRisers.

Engagement

After the programme, 31 participants met all the requirements for graduation. These requirements included consistent participation in campaigning activities and regular attendance at scheduled sessions. Additionally, four more participants remained engaged in various aspects of the programme until the end, bringing the total number of engaged participants to 35.

Detailed participant engagement:

- **Core participants (31):** These individuals demonstrated consistent engagement throughout the programme. All 31 were active members of a nature connection campaign group, regularly attending live sessions or accessing session recordings to stay involved.
- **Additional engaged participants (4):** Four participants also engaged with the programme during this term. While they were not members of the campaign group, they participated in key in-person events such as the Power in Action trip to Parliament and SWT Nature Connection opportunities.
- **Non-engaged participants in term 3 (4):** A group of four participants did not engage during Term 3, despite being active in the first two terms. It is important to note that these individuals have not officially dropped out of the programme, and their lack of engagement in Term 3 does not necessarily reflect complete disengagement.
- **Participants who dropped out (5):** Five participants chose to leave the programme, although one of them attended an in-person session during Term 3 but otherwise did not engage.

Participant engagement over time:

- Initial Participants (October): 68
- Engaged Participants in Term 1 (December): 56

- Engaged Participants in Term 2 (April): 35
- Participants Completing the Programme (July): 31

By the end of the programme, 31 participants had successfully completed all requirements, underscoring a core group of consistently engaged individuals. In total, **35 participants remained engaged in some capacity until the end of the programme**, reflecting the broader reach and sustained impact of the programme's activities. While engagement naturally decreased over time, with some participants reducing their involvement, the programme maintained a strong core group, demonstrating its overall effectiveness in fostering long-term participation and impact.



Building a community

Throughout the delivery of the programme, UpRising and Shropshire Wildlife Trust embedded a number of activities and opportunities to encourage the cohort to bond, share and learn from each other. Where possible activities were designed to allow the cohort to develop their community whilst spending time in nature and/or also developing their connection with nature.

The programme took place through a **combination of digital and in-person delivery**, with a digital learning space and communications platform utilised throughout the duration of the programme to engage participants, share information and resources, and encourage community building.

Community building and fostering connections were central themes in participants' reflections, with many emphasising the importance of forming social bonds and a sense of belonging. The programme provided valuable opportunities for participants to connect with others who shared similar interests, both in person and online. These interactions, including networking and sharing personal stories—particularly those related to nature—helped participants feel part of a larger community of environmentalists. As one participant noted, **"meeting everyone from the programme in person and feeling connected to all environmentalists"** was a highlight of their experience.

Participants also appreciated the programme's hands-on activities, such as making a salt scrub or crafting a clay candle holder, which not only brought joy but also sparked meaningful conversations and deepened connections. Playful activities like throwing mud at a wall or playing conkers introduced a sense of childlike fun and nostalgia, further enriching the experience and bringing participants closer together.

A strong sense of community was nurtured during Zoom calls and in-person events, with the launch weekend playing a particularly important role in forging connections and highlighting the diversity within environmental careers. The programme created a supportive and welcoming atmosphere where participants felt safe to express their thoughts and ideas, regardless of their level of expertise.

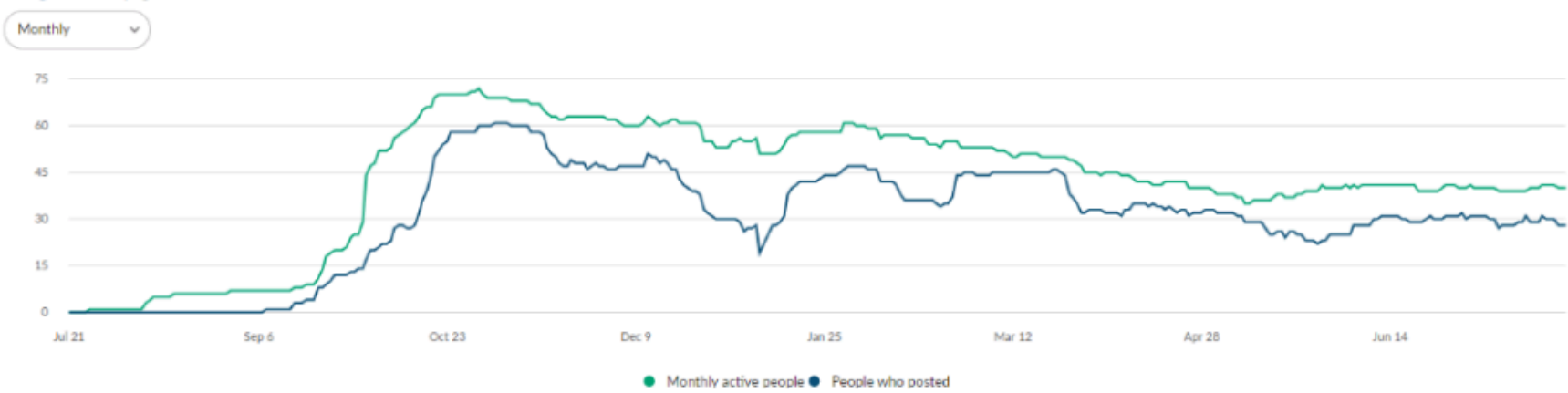
Networking was another key component of the programme, with participants valuing the chance to connect with like-minded individuals and professionals. Visits to locations like Highbury Hall provided invaluable opportunities to network with companies and organisations relevant to their future career aspirations. Overall, participants found the programme's emphasis on community building, diverse perspectives, and ongoing feedback to be both enriching and fulfilling.

The programme's communications platform, Slack, facilitated communication and sharing for **71 members of the cohort and programme team**, with **4,255 messages sent across 20 channels/subject areas**.

Below are details of the numbers of individuals engaging with different stages of the open recruitment process.

Active people in your workspace

See how many people are active — meaning they posted a message or read at least one channel or direct message. To see billing numbers, go to the [Billing Overview](#) page.



Communication platforms

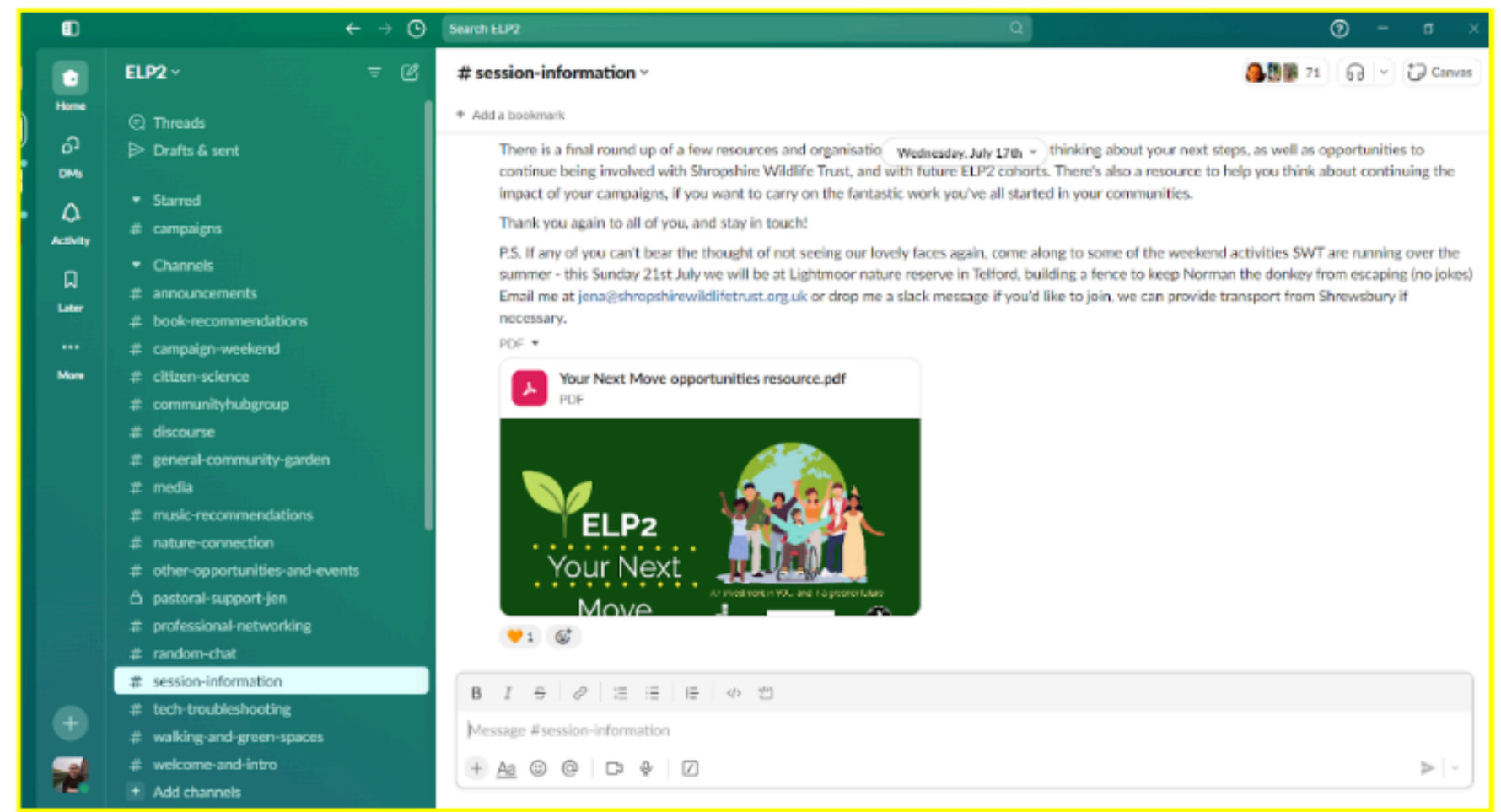
During their time on the programme, participants engaged through a variety of different communication platforms facilitating conversations between members of the cohort and the programme team. These included **Zoom for facilitating online events and programme sessions** and **Slack for wrap around communications**. The cohort also had access to a **learning hub hosted on the platform Mighty Networks**. This Hub facilitated the sharing of programme documents, resources and the timetable with participants, comparable with the likes of an Intranet.

The ELP2 Slack workspace was established as the main communication hub for programme participants. By the programme's conclusion, 40 members remained actively engaged. Member activity reached its peak in October 2023, coinciding with the start of the programme and the Launch Weekend. Following this, there was a gradual decline in active members from October to July 2024. This trend corresponds with a general decrease in participant engagement over time, with notable dips around December and March, aligning with holiday breaks for Christmas and Easter.

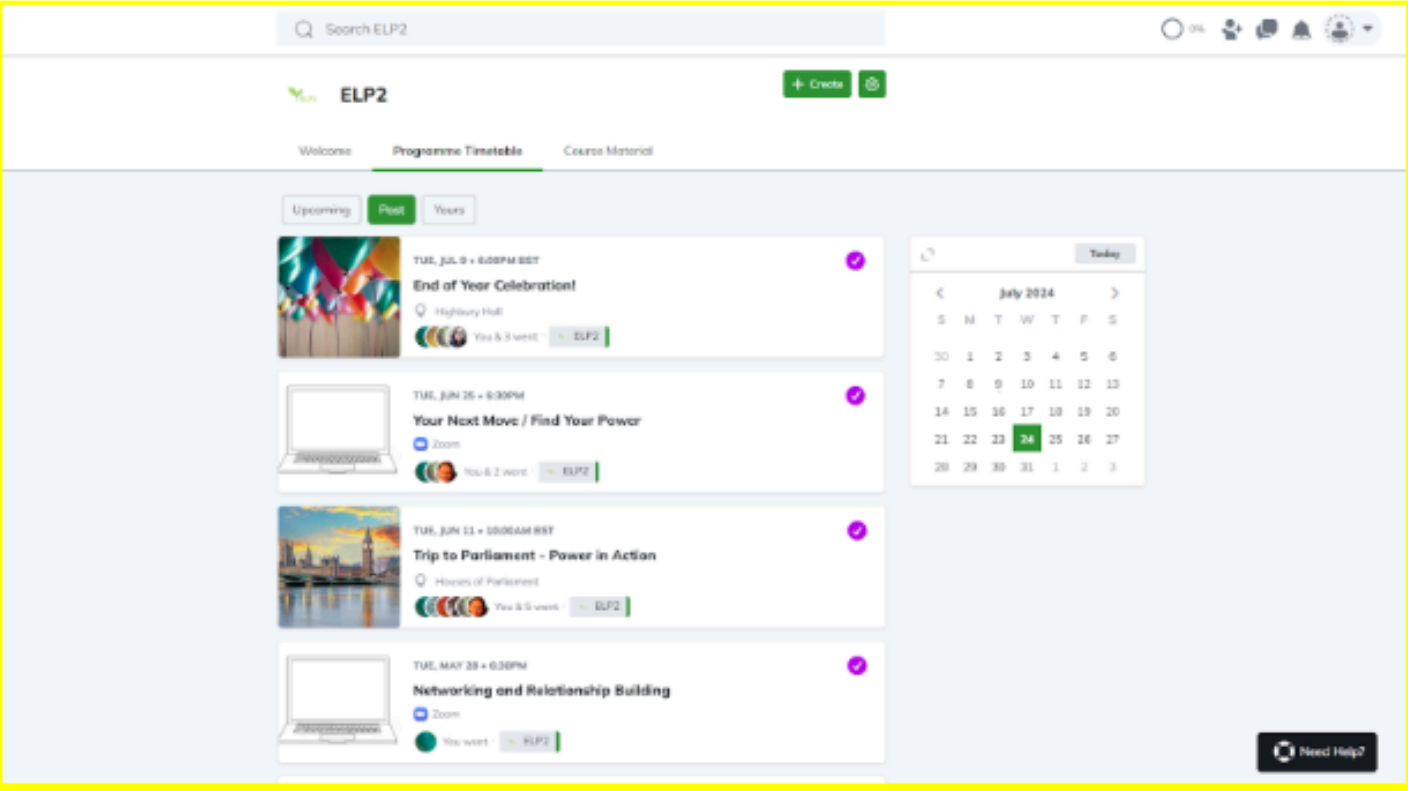
Throughout the nine-month programme, a total of 4,255 messages were exchanged on the Slack workspace. Direct messages comprised 71% of these communications, reflecting the pastoral team's preference for one-on-one interactions. Public channels accounted for 26% of the messages, while only 3% were sent in private channels.

During the programme, 20 public channels were created, initiated by both the team and participants. However, this large number of channels was overwhelming for many participants, leading to confusion. This feedback has prompted the team to reconsider and streamline the channel structure for future iterations of the programme.

Below is a screenshot of the Slack communication platform the programme delivery team used to facilitate communications.



Below is a screenshot of the Learning Hub the programme delivery team used to share resources and information with the cohort.



Extra-curricular activities and opportunities through the programme

ELP2 also made efforts to connect with other organisations, signposting and encouraging programme participants to take on extracurricular activities and opportunities to support their programme goals and professional development. These included:

- **Campaign group and grounded cafe** - One campaign group developed a relationship with Grounded Cafe in Selly Oak to run activities and is hopeful about continuing this collaboration to create a community garden. This partnership aims to strengthen local community ties and promote sustainable practices.

- **Street allotment project engagement** - Two participants attended events with the Street Allotment Project in Shrewsbury. This project, which had also participated in Campaign Weekend sessions, provided an opportunity to connect with other local groups and continue building networks. Despite not being able to pursue their own campaign idea due to capacity issues and team members dropping out, their involvement with the Street Allotment Project facilitated valuable connections and local engagement.
- **Sharing career development opportunities** - An exciting opportunity for an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) internship with The Wildlife Trusts (TWT) was shared with the ELP2 cohort via our Slack channel. This internship provides valuable experience and aligns with our programme's commitment to fostering diverse and inclusive environmental work.
- **Participant involvement in other partner-led programmes** - The Lightmoor reptile monitoring programme was successfully established, with assistance from a participant on the initial day. One participant has expressed interest in continuing to support the programme in future monitoring sessions, offering valuable hands-on experience for those involved.
- **Shropshire & Telford Climate Conference** - Several participants attended the Shropshire & Telford Climate Conference. Another participant played a key role in planning and organising the event, showcasing leadership and teamwork within the programme.
- **"Climate and Nature Debate" Hustings Event** - In the run-up to the general election, participants organised and hosted a local "Climate and Nature Debate" hustings event in Shrewsbury. This event provided a platform for important discussions on environmental issues and highlighted the programme's engagement in civic activities.
- **Restore Nature Now March** - The Restore Nature Now march took place in London on June 22nd. Participants joined the march with various organisations: one with SWT, two with the Woodland Trust, and another with the RSPB Youth Council. Their involvement demonstrated the programme's commitment to advocating for environmental causes on a national level.

Coaching

A unique and key part of the programme is the access to and meaningful time participants are encouraged to spend with a professional coach. Coaching is included in the programme to support young people to feel they have a guide and meaningful individualised support whilst on their ELP2 journey.

The following are insights from the experiences of both coaches and participants from this programme:

- “As a coach, I had so much fun talking with the coachee and I feel privileged to have spent this time with him, and for the trust and confidence he has shown to me.” - ELP2 Coach
- “I have really enjoyed my time working with on this project and hope to continue to be available moving forward both for students and those running the charity.” - ELP2 Coach
- “[Coaching] has been really good! My coach is really good at their job and asking questions from my stream of consciousness.” Alexander, programme participant
- “It's really positive, really interesting and probably not what I was expecting, but in a good way! It's been really good so far.” - Alana, programme participant
- “Coaching is going really well, [my Coach] has been absolutely amazing.” - Ebele, programme participant

4. Share, Learn, Improve (SLI)

The Share, Learn, Improve (SLI) function is a key component of our strategy, divided into two distinct parts: **internal SLI**, which focuses on continuous improvement within the programme team and the programme partnership with UpRising and SWT, and **external SLI**, which aims to enhance the value and impact of the ELP2 programme beyond its direct participants.

Internal SLI

The internal SLI function is dedicated to the continuous development and refinement of the ELP2 programme through reflective practice. This involves a structured process of reviewing the programme's progress, identifying areas for enhancement, and implementing improvements.

Our internal SLI framework ensures that we:

- **Continuously develop and improve** through reflective practice.
- **Document the project's evolution** over time.
- **Share insights and learnings** internally to inform future programme delivery.

Reflective practice is central to our internal SLI approach, allowing the programme team to critically assess each stage of the project. This enables us to adapt and enhance the programme based on real-time feedback and lessons learned, ultimately improving its effectiveness and impact.

During the 2023/4 cycle, we delivered several meetings, each centred on a specific theme:

- **20th November 2023 (Online):** Reflections on recruitment and the early months of the programme.
- **15th January 2024 (In-person):** Building partnership and culture.
- **1st March 2024 (Online):** Communication and ways of working.
- **1st June 2024 (In-person):** Reflections on Year 1 of the programme.

These meetings provided a platform for sharing experiences, best practices, and lessons learned, benefiting not only the programme participants but also a wider audience interested in youth development and organisational growth.

External SLI

The external SLI function is designed to extend the benefits of the ELP2 programme to a broader audience, including partner organisations, the wider CAF community, and other stakeholders. The goal is to share learning and insights that can be applied beyond the immediate scope of the programme.

To drive continuous improvement, we have established a framework that assigns a specific theme of learning and improvement to each year of programme delivery. The designated themes are:

- **Working in Partnership**
- **Diverse Recruitment**
- **Nature Connection for All**
- **Organisational Development**
- **Leaving a Legacy.**

These themes guide our efforts to share programme learning and influence the wider sector and play a part in creating systemic change for young people across the UK, opening up opportunities to build nature connection and develop skills and experience.

Year 1 Insight Piece

Over the course of the 2023/24 programme we developed the first project SLI Insight Piece, reflecting on and developing a report on Organisations Working in Partnership. The report reviewed the first year of the ELP2 partnership between UpRising and Shropshire Wildlife Trust (SWT), focusing on successes, challenges, and lessons learned. We captured this through a combination of team surveys, 1:1 interviews, and capturing and reflecting on team guided reflections and development with an external coach.

Findings showed that the partnership combined diverse expertise, fostering mutual learning despite challenges such as time constraints and integration issues. UpRising's agility and differing organisational cultures were highlighted.

Benefits of partnership working included the power that merging diverse skills and experiences had on driving innovation and change. Significant challenges included aligning organisational priorities, team management across different organisations and frameworks, and establishing shared culture and values.

Significant lessons were highlighted around the importance of aligning goals early on, integrating teams well, establishing clear communication channels, roles and responsibilities, and investing in appropriate set-up and team development time, with longer mobilisation periods being seen as key to mitigating risks such as not meeting project outcomes, and negative impacts on team morale.

The report developed 10 top tips for organisations to consider when entering into a partnership project. These were:

- 1. Share organisational stories:** Take the time to openly share each organisation's history, strengths, and areas for development. Understanding each other's background fosters empathy and collaboration.
- 2. Establish clear roles and responsibilities:** Define roles early on to avoid confusion and ensure accountability within the partnership.
- 3. Align values and goals:** Ensure that all parties involved share common values and goals to maintain alignment throughout the partnership.
- 4. Build rapport and trust:** Allow space for team members to connect personally. Building relationships based on trust enhances collaboration and problem-solving.
- 5. Set clear ways of working:** Establish explicit guidelines and protocols for communication, decision-making, and conflict resolution across the partnership.
- 6. Unified recruitment and induction:** Ideally, have all team members start together on a project with a unified introduction and induction process. This promotes a cohesive team dynamic from the outset.
- 7. Standardised processes and policies:** Ensure consistency in induction processes and ideally line management across partner organisations. This reduces confusion and aligns expectations.
- 8. Ensure adoption of processes:** Actively involve team members in developing processes and structures collaboratively. This increases buy-in and ensures better adoption of agreed-upon methods.
- 9. Proactive issue management for remote teams:** Address potential issues proactively in remote partnership teams. Tools like Slack can facilitate personal connections and smooth communication across different locations.
- 10. Manage organisational dynamics:** Be mindful of power dynamics between lead and partner organisations. Avoid micromanagement by leads and feelings of powerlessness among partners by fostering open communication and mutual respect.



5. Recommendations

Below are recommendations to consider for the next year's programme.

Recruitment

- 1. Start earlier with recruitment:** Begin the recruitment process sooner to ensure ample time for outreach and follow-ups.
- 2. Engage participants for ideas:** Ask current participants for suggestions on groups and communities to approach for recruitment.
- 3. Utilise individual QR codes:** Implement the use of individual QR codes for easier and more efficient tracking of applications.
- 4. Review Keele Uni participant feedback:** Evaluate feedback from Keele University participants to determine if our public relations efforts were effective and if similar activities should be pursued in future.
- 5. Enhance our online presence:** Maintain a strong online presence, leveraging job boards and social media platforms like LinkedIn, which have proven effective in attracting applicants.
- 6. Target young people more specifically:** Improve targeting strategies for young people by being more selective with the organisations and events we engage with, ensuring they align with our desired demographic.
- 7. Conduct thorough research:** Perform detailed research and build relationships with a smaller number of key organisations, focusing on how best to reach young people.
- 8. Diversify our participant pool:** While working with academic institutions has been successful, efforts should be made to diversify our pool of participants beyond university students.
- 9. Increase application pipeline for Year 2:** To boost initial enrolments and graduation rates in the programme, we should:
 - Deliver more taster sessions, especially targeting upper sixth colleges (18-20 year olds

- Tap into alternative communities across the West Midlands, including faith-based groups and special interest groups.
- Develop 3-5 strong stakeholder relationships with organisations like the Princes Trust to access larger numbers of young people.

Curriculum and delivery

1. Session management and campaign timing

- **Reduce session duration and start campaigns earlier**
 - Shorten the overall duration of sessions to retain more participants.
 - Begin campaigns earlier to sustain engagement.
 - Space out events strategically to encourage continued participation (e.g., similar to the engagement observed with the parliament event).
- **Concentrate fortnightly online sessions**
 - Implement a more focused schedule of fortnightly online sessions.
 - Capitalise on the heightened excitement and engagement levels observed during in-person sessions.

2. Design and development

- **Improve design and development involvement**
 - Ensure timely onboarding of staff to facilitate their involvement in curriculum design and development.
 - Foster better alignment and preparedness within the delivery team to avoid a sense of playing catch-up.
- **Effective briefs and fair delegation**
 - Address delivery challenges by ensuring briefs are used effectively and roles and responsibilities are delegated fairly.
- **Team member loss and adaptation**
 - Acknowledge the difficulties encountered with the loss of a team member and operating understaffed, and develop better adaptation strategies.
- **Collaborative planning**
 - Engage all delivery team members in discussions about curriculum and session delivery to manage workloads and improve workflow.

3. Scheduling and Resource Management

- **Address Scheduling Blockers**
 - Plan for potential blockers (e.g., parliament sessions or staff annual leave) that may necessitate adjustments in session sequencing.
 - Aim to avoid last-minute changes by anticipating and mitigating these issues.
- **Secure Speakers and Venues in Advance**
 - Book speakers and venues well in advance to establish a stable and consistent programme timetable.
 - Ensure sessions proceed as planned and align with the participant journey.
- **Increase External Speaker Involvement**
 - Engage more external speakers throughout the programme to enhance the learning experience.
 - Continue working with external speakers, as they have received positive feedback from both the speakers themselves and the cohort.
- **Improve Speaker Briefs and Processes**
 - Enhance the speaker briefs and overall speaker process to address issues encountered throughout the year.
 - Ensure clearer communication with speakers, outlining deadlines and expectations from the outset.
- **Timely Speaker Engagement**
 - Avoid last-minute rushes by engaging speakers earlier and simplifying the process for speaker involvement.
- **Reflect Diversity and Lived Experience**
 - Ensure that speakers across the programme reflect the diversity and lived experiences of the cohort.

4. Communication Strategies

- **Enhance Communication of Participant Journey**
 - Improve communication about the participant journey and theory of change.
 - Help participants understand the relevance of programme experiences and how to apply them in their daily lives during and after the programme.
- **Streamline Communication Tools**
 - Streamline Slack to just a few channels for better organisation (participants can still create their own channels if needed).
 - Encourage participants to download Slack on their phones, reassuring them that we won't be constantly messaging.
 - Use Mighty Networks for a more consistent communication approach with regular updates.
 - Maintain Slack as a primary communication tool for participants, ensuring it remains a dedicated space for cohort and team engagement.
- **Set Clear Communication Expectations**
 - Set clearer communication expectations at the beginning of the programme, such as notifying the team when participants will be absent from a session.
 - Ensure a more organised approach to participant communications, involving all members of the delivery team actively and visibly on communication platforms.
- **Adhere to Communication Schedules**
 - Adhere to a consistent communication schedule and ensure the entire delivery team follows the plan for programme communications with participants.
 - Streamline the communication process ahead of Year 2, asking the whole team to adhere to the established schedule.

5. Team development and feedback

- **Recognise team efforts:** Acknowledge the excellent work done by the team and note that the main issue has been participant drop-off.
 - Believe that curriculum changes will help address this issue.
- **Increase involvement:** Ensure closer involvement to better understand and address potential issues, leveraging team feedback and insights.
- **Respond to Feedback:** Highlight positive feedback from participants and the team's responsiveness to minor criticisms, such as implementing facilitated breakout rooms in online sessions.
- **Training in facilitation skills:** Organise specific training for facilitation skills in both in-person and online delivery to enhance session effectiveness.
- **Ownership and improvement:** Encourage the delivery team to take ownership of programme content and ways of working, aiming for continuous improvement in session delivery.
- **Utilise resources and processes:** Emphasise the importance of fully utilising available resources and adhering to established processes to improve session delivery quality.
- **Promote diversity on panels:** Aim for more diversity on panels and discuss it when it's not possible.
- **Set good foundations for building relationships with participants:** Keep team members comms with participants consistent to establish a personal relationship with the pastoral lead from the beginning.

Monitoring, evaluation and impact (MEI)

1. **Streamline data collection:** Review the repetition in feedback requests to encourage greater response rates from participants throughout the programme.

2. Review the framework: Maintain and enhance elements of the MEI process that worked well, such as mid-programme calls and surveys, while exploring new methods to sustain engagement.

3. Improve communication about the importance of data collection and the reasons behind survey and form completion to participants.

4. Diversify feedback collection methods to avoid overusing the same formats, such as keep/add/takeaway padlets.

5. Continue and expand the practice of providing feedback to participants about how their input has influenced program delivery at the start of each term.



Thank you.

